

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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TO: Secretary of State

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SENT DEPARTMENT 1822; REPEATED INFORMATION LONDON 352,
PARIS 325, BONN 241, BERLIN 138.

SOME DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES AND VISITING CORRESPONDENTS, NOTING THAT SOVIET PEOPLE NOT BEING PREPARED FOR WAR, CONCLUDE THIS IS INDICATION KHRUSHCHEV BLUFFING ON BERLIN ISSUE. WHILE I THINK MYSELF KHRUSHCHEV WOULD BACK DOWN BEFORE FIRM WESTERN STAND BACKED BY CLEAR INDICATION WILLINGNESS RISK WAR OVER BERLIN ISSUE, I DO NOT CONSIDER LACK OF PREPARATION SOVIET PEOPLE PROVES ANYTHING. SUCH PREPARATION WOULD GENERATE PRESSURES FROM PUBLIC, WHO WISH AVOID WAR AT ALMOST ANY COST, WHICH WOULD BE EMBARRASSING TO KHRUSHCHEV. MOREOVER DELIBERATE STIMULATION OF WAR SCARE AS IN LEBANESE CRISIS IS USUALLY SIGN SOVIETS ARE NOT SERIOUS. WAR SCARE WOULD ALSO NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH SOVIET LINE THAT THEY HAVE PUT FORWARD REASONABLE PROPOSALS AND ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER COUNTERPROPOSALS AND THAT WAR OVER THIS ISSUE UNTHINKABLE. SOVIETS COULD OF COURSE PUT THEIR ENORMOUS INTERNAL PROPAGANDA MACHINE INTO FULL OPERATION AT SHORT NOTICE.

THOMPSON

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By AR NARA, Date 1-8-78